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Challenges of retaining senior managers at the Department of Social Development

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CHALLENGES OF RETAINING SENIOR MANAGERS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE, LAW AND MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT (PUBLIC AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)

Supervisor: Mr T E Motswaledi

March 2015

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (Public and Development Management) to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

_____

Constance Boni Malefahlo

March 2015

ABSTRACT

This study explored challenges of retaining senior managers at the department of social development focusing on the Comprehensive Social Security branch.

A comprehensive study of the literature was conducted and numerous themes pertaining to retention were identified. These themes were central to shedding light on key issues apposite to employee retention; and assisted in setting the broad context of what the study would be articulating. The themes identified in the literature were: employee retention, employee turnover, exit interviews, job satisfaction and staff morale. A basic qualitative research method was adopted in order to understand how DSD senior managers make sense of their work experiences.

An interview guide was developed to gather the participant's feelings, beliefs and perceptions around the topic of retention. The data collected from the interviews was subjected to thematic analysis in order to identify patterns of meaning across the dataset. The themes that emerged from the coded process of analysis were: organisational red tape, performance appraisal, better opportunities, organisational climate and employee morale. These themes were identified as the underlying factors to the inefficient and ineffective management of retention in the department.

The results of the study have assisted to reflect on factors that could lead to turnover while identifying and affirming the challenges faced by the department in retaining their senior managers. The conclusions thereof culminated in recommending ways of mitigating the scourge; which will be valuable to the department to enhance performance by retaining their high performing senior managers.
The recommendations were following through from the themes and conclusions, paying attention to each one of them as follows: Cut the red tape; appraise efficiently; be the best opportunity; survey the climate; and boost employee morale

Even though the study may not lead to generalizations of conclusions drawn, it will contribute to the employee retention literature and serve as a basis for future studies.

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to my late uncle, Mr Simon Masilela who had an unwavering faith in me, strongly believing that I am capable of achieving anything I want to be. His love has carried me through; and it is unfortunate that he did not live long enough to witness this milestone.

This is for you Dlambili!!!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a long and short three years. Long because of the sleepless nights, challenging exams and minimal social life; short because of the lifelong friendships, lasting memories, and truly interesting and amazing knowledge I have acquired.
It has been a difficult road but as it is said 'difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations'. Through it all, I've learnt to trust in Jesus, I've learnt to trust in God. Through it all, I've learnt to depend upon His word. He keeps on doing great things.

I wish to articulate my most sincere appreciation to my mother Julia Nyembe and my sisters (Madrayi's Girls) Fikile, Tozi, Zandi and Zodwa who kept cheering me on. They were my pillars of strength and prayer partners when I was overwhelmed with feelings of dejection. Ngiyanithanda MaNcamane amahle!

I also wish to pay tribute to my wonderful children Tholakele, Lefa and Bokamoso who persevered and endured the absence of their mother when I was immersed in books and hardly saw them.

Not forgetting to acknowledge my aunt, my role model and my mentor, Thabsile Msiza. I always epitomise her.

The most sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Mr Tlhotse Enoch Motswaledi, for his unremitting support, assiduous guidance and relentless commitment to taking me through the research.

I appreciate the Department of Social Development for the financial support and for granting me approval to conduct the study, together with the managers who acceded and afforded me time to interview them despite their hectic schedules.

Finally, I will forever be grateful to the University of the Witwatersrand, more specifically, the Wits School of Governance for giving me the opportunity to further my education.

MERCI BEAUCOUP!!!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The world has in recent times witnessed significant levels of employees who are considered “mobile” largely as a result of globalisation and consequent employment patterns (Miller, 2007). In lieu of this phenomenon, the retention of skilled employees has become a serious concern to managers as an ever increasing rate of employee turnover remains a significant cost to organisations (Ghere & York-Barr, 2007).

Albeit the above wave, the business environment has become very competitive by essentially making skilled employees a major differentiating factor (Macintosh, 2012). Government is also not immune to this turnover phenomenon. The Public Service Commission (PSC) has noted the concerns regarding what is seen as the apparent fast mobility of staff within the Public Service (PSC, 2008).
In particular, the concerns raised in this regard are that there seems to be a trend of public servants being promoted precipitately from one level to another, and this progression usually leads to a high tempo of reshuffle (moving from one government department to the other) of Senior Management Service (SMS) in the Public Service.

The untoward effect of the reshuffle referred to is in many instances volatility and loss of proficiency within departments of government. This occurring, despite the fact that the Ministry of Public Service and Administration released the SMS Handbook in 2003 which in its foreword recognises that improved service delivery requires “a modern, people-centred public service i.e. a public service that accepts both the challenges and opportunities of being a primary agent of the developmental state”.

The SMS Handbook further states that senior managers play a critical role in the functioning of the public service and it is their responsibility to convert the policy mandates of government into effective departmental strategies, plans and programs. One of the affected departments of government is the Department of Social

Development (DSD) which derives its core mandate from the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No.108 of 1996). Section 27 (1) (c) of the constitution provides for the right of access to appropriate social assistance to those unable to support themselves and their dependants.
Further to the above, Section 28 (1) of the constitution of the country effectively sets out the rights of children with regard to appropriate care, basic nutrition, shelter, health care, social services, and detention (DSD Annual Report, 2014).

Obviously, an organisation can never hold on to all its best personnel, but can at least curtail the loss. Minimising employee turnover is a strategic and vital issue, beneficial to an organisation's bottom line. It takes considerable time and resources to attain a staff component to be proud of, and therefore replacing them starves the organization of numerous essential success factors such as service delivery, public perception and ultimate triumph (Abassi & Hollman, 2000; Griffeth & Hom, 2001)

The turnover phenomenon prompted the researcher to therefore explore the challenges faced by the Department of Social Development's Comprehensive Social Security branch in retaining senior managers and to further examine the significant information on why senior managers leave/ stay in this particular branch.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The massive inequalities across all sectors of society created by apartheid policies affected social cohesion, undermined efficiency, economic growth and contributed to a high level of social unrest and crime, which in turn undermined democracy and development. Following a new era of democracy ushered in 1994, the ANC-led government took a conscious decision to restructure the Public Service amongst other notable developments by creating the Senior Management Service (SMS).

The SMS dispensation was largely meant to ensure that a new mechanism of attracting and retaining competent managers within the Public Service was put in place. It was also aimed at ushering in a new process of managing performance as well as career incidents of senior managers within the Public Service, whilst promoting high standards of ethical conduct and behaviour. This government

intervention indicated the importance of senior managers within the governance system.

A significant amount of research on talent retention has concentrated on understanding various reasons behind employees' resolutions to leave organizations, together with the processes by which they make such preferences. By establishing why people leave, companies also achieve an improved idea of why employees stay and can learn how to manipulate these decisions. Much research also centres on employees who leave, on the supposition that understanding why people leave will assist organizations determine how to keep them. It is of equal importance to understand the reasons for employees to stay (Macintosh, 2012 & McKeown, 2002)

In the health sector, the migration of health professionals termed the "brain drain" or "human capital flight" has been witnessed over time (Tucho, 2009, p.23). In the same way as the SMS mobility impacts on the Government-wide public service machinery, the movement of health professionals particularly from developing countries has had an even adverse impact on health systems of affected countries.

Some key lessons emerging from the above include an appreciation that the migration of professionals is possible when such professionals possess marketable skills. It is therefore necessary for organizations to accept that international professional mobility is inevitable when persons have skills they can sell in a wider marketplace. (Martineau, Decker, & Bundred, 2004)

To address the issue of SMS mobility the research was focused on understanding factors considered critical or at least significant by those contemplating to leave the DSD. The shortage of senior managers in government departments as indicated in different reports presented to parliament over the years (presented largely as vacancy rate), remains one of the challenges that the DSD faces.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The DSD directly or indirectly offers a wide range of services to the public. One such service is in the realm of social security, an area within which the SMS retention will be discussed. Social security is when government consciously introduces action programmes intended to promote the welfare of its citizenry through assistance measures, assuring access to sufficient resources, the provision of decent shelter and food as well as to promote health and well-being for the population in general.

The action programmes referred to are also geared towards potentially vulnerable segments of South Africa's populace of children, the elderly, the sick and the unemployed in particular. This provision is entrenched in section 27(1) (c) of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and is underpinned by fundamental rights to human dignity, equality and freedom.

The South African social security system has a long history of fragmentation due to apartheid discriminatory laws and policies. Structurally, It has four major elements, namely private savings; social insurance; social assistance and social relief. Functionally, the system therefore spans different government departments, parastatals and the private sector.

In an attempt to contextualise the above to SMS, it is noted that Social Security is a relatively new academic field and therefore, not many people are qualified in this arena. Senior managers in the DSD have undergone skills development programmes within and outside the country to be equipped with the requisite skills.

The skills acquired are extensive, sought after and consequently poached by many institutions similar or different in focus. It is therefore of grievous concern to notice the alarming rate at which senior managers leave the organisation, when one considers total remuneration costs at this level, coupled to training costs and costs related to replacing such senior managers.

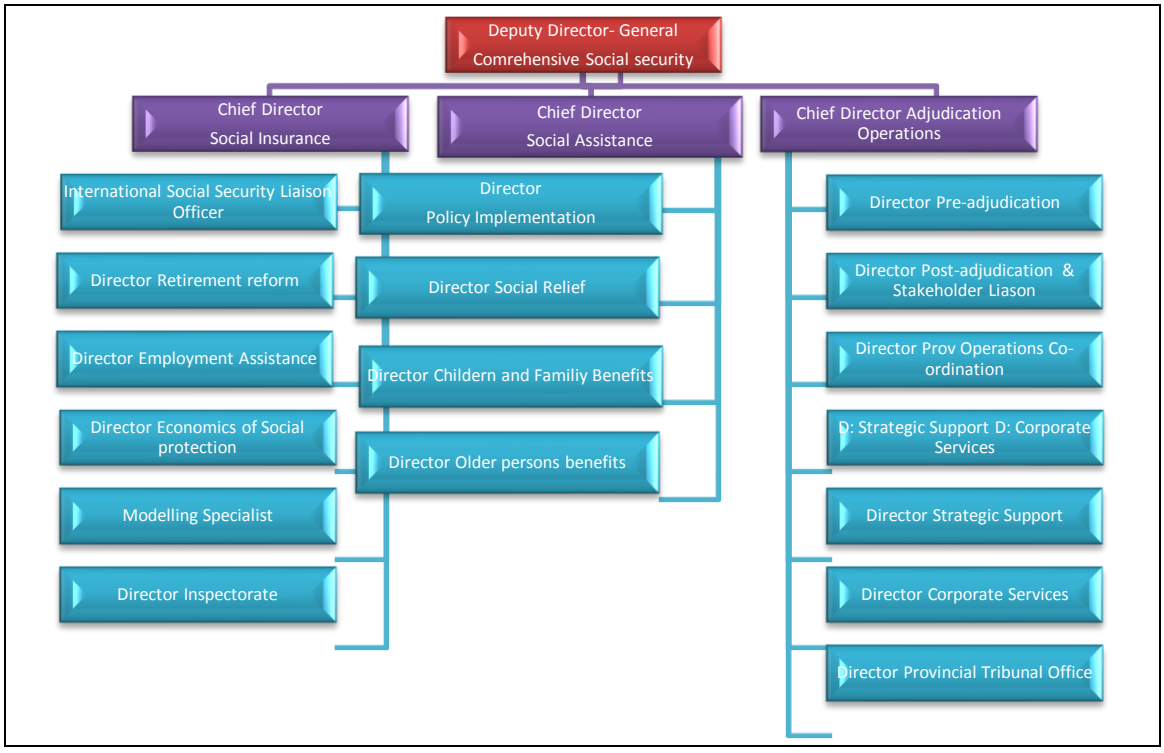
The department invests significant amounts of money in training the staff on the requisite skills and this necessitates holding on to them for as long as possible. The poor retention of senior managers presents a definite problem to be investigated.

1.4 STUDY SETTING

In order to reflect on key questions around retention coupled to a need to making appropriate recommendations, the study focused on the National Department of Social Development as the population of choice. Within the Department of Social Development, there is a branch called Comprehensive Social Security (CSS) whose purpose is to provide for social security policy development, administrative justice, the administration of social grants and the reduction of incorrect payments.

The CSS Branch is divided into Social Security Policy Development (which includes Social Assistance and Social Insurance); Appeals and Adjudication which provides redress to aggrieved applicants and beneficiaries through fair and just adjudication of social assistance appeals; and the Inspectorate for Social Security(in the process of being established) which is expected to contribute to the effective, transparent, accountable and coherent governance of the social assistance system and the maintenance of its integrity (DSD Annual Report, 2014). It is therefore significant to recruit and retain staff that will be sufficiently competent to undertake these responsibilities. Figure 1 below shows the branch being studied.

Figure 1: The structure of the Comprehensive Social Security Branch



Source: DSD Annual Report, 2014

Figure 1 shows the approved structure of the SMS level within the Comprehensive Social Security branch. Albeit the structure is approved, a number of posts have remained vacant for varying periods of time; some have been vacant for two years.
The figure outlines how different positions within the Comprehensive Social Security Branch give life to the department's mandate. From the structure presented it is evident that the branch has managers at levels significant in terms of cost to company and accountability.

In the press release of 21 July 2013, Mr Mike Waters, the then shadow Minister of Social Development from the Democratic Alliance which is an official opposition of the ruling party, raised an alarm regarding the significant vacancies at senior levels within the Department of Social Development. Mr Waters mentioned that 25 senior management positions within the department remained vacant for various periods ranging from a month to three years. He gave an example of key positions such as Deputy Director-General: Strategic Management and Organisational Transformation (vacant for three years), the Director: Corporate Communication (vacant for 16months) and the Chief Information Officer (vacant for 13 months) as well as a vacant Chief Financial Officer post (http://www.da.org.za/newsroom)

This dire situation was again raised on the 23rd January 2014 when the Minister in the Department of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini had a 'Connect Session' with the entire staff component where she despondently announced the departure of nine (9) Senior Managers in 2013 and enunciated that the loss of one senior manager is one too many.

1.5 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to explore, explain and present the challenges of retaining senior managers at the National Department of Social Development.
The study further aimed at collecting, collating and analyzing data in order to make informed recommendations on the possible strategies to be considered and/ or implemented in minimizing the impact of SMS flight to other departments of government or even the private sector.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Four objectives for this study were crafted:

To discern the antecedents of senior management retention
To establish the level of turnover and identify recent turnover trends
To explore the intentions for people to leave/ stay in the department.
To identify strategies of retaining senior managers

The research was not intended to prove or disprove any theories or hypotheses, but to corroborate the facts and generate recommendations to resolve a particular organisational problem. The outcome of the study, will therefore, be availed to the Department of Social Development to develop appropriate policies, practices, and strategies around the management of senior managers. It is envisaged that once the findings and the analysis thereof have been studied, recommendations made will assist the DSD in creating greater efficiencies so as to meet strategic departmental objectives.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research was structured to have a primary research question and at least three secondary research questions. The primary question is largely informed by both the background of this study and the purpose statement. The four questions the study sought to answer are presented below:-

Primary Research Question:

What are the challenges faced by the Department of Social Development in retaining senior managers?

Secondary Research Questions:

What motivates senior managers' intentions to leave the department?
To what extent are senior managers managed to avert turnover intention?
What strategies should the Department consider and/or implement in order to retain senior managers?

1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following briefs and/ or highlights indicate key considerations with respect to the methodology followed with a detailed account of the methodology presented in Chapter three (3)

1.8.1 Research Philosophy/ Paradigm

The philosophy of this research was naturalistic as it focused more on understanding what was happening in a particular instance rather than on attempting to predict what would happen in the future. The naturalist paradigm accentuates the significance of context, of intricacy, of examining conditions in which the factors interrelate (Creswell, 2007)

The research followed an Interpretivism paradigm which can also be referred to as Social Constructionism in the field of management research to understand the reality of challenges relating to the retention of senior managers in the Department of Social Development. According to this philosophical approach researchers give importance to their beliefs and value to give adequate justification for a research problem (Easterby-Smith et al. 2006).

Primarily, researchers focus on highlighting the real facts and figures according to the research problem. The approach requires smaller samples for an in-depth understanding of views held by many in the same population (Kasi, 2009).

1.8.2 Research strategy/ approach

The research was conducted using a qualitative research strategy. Qualitative research yields detailed explanation reported in the voices of participants and contextualised in the settings in which they provide experiences and the meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2008).

The research approach adopted was inductive in the sense that the researcher built a concept by first collecting data and then developing a conclusion by looking for a pattern of meaning on the basis of the data collected. All data was informed by

themes solicited from the literature review coupled to all other themes that emerged throughout the interview sessions.
There is a limited number of senior manages in the branch and the strategy did not allow for random selection of participants, instead, the sample was purposively selected.

1.8.3 Type of qualitative research and research methods

An interview guide was used to conduct face-to-face semi structured interviews in order to collect the primary data. The planned interview sessions aimed at tapping into experiences and the extensive knowledge held by the respondents with relevant information pertinent to the problem. All senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security branch were prospective candidates for these interviews, including some senior managers who had since left the branch and in some instances, the department.

Being part of the Senior Management Service (SMS) within the branch gave the researcher an advantage of easy access to all the colleagues and guaranteed spontaneity in the responses.

1.8.4 Data Collection

The researcher acted as a primary instrument for data collection. The data was collected in text form and recordings where possible were made. For secondary data, the Human Resources Manager was requested to provide statistical data on the senior management turnover for a period of 24 months. Further to this requirement, relevant reports on key exit interview experiences as well as annual reports were sought.

1.8.5 Sampling

All senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security were potential candidates for planned interviews, including managers who have since left the department. The

sample in this qualitative research was purposive which means that participants were selected because they were likely to generate useful data for the research. Purposive sampling (also known as judgemental sampling) is non-random sampling in which the researcher uses a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of a highly specific and difficult-to reach population (Neuman: 2011).

The purposive sample size was determined on the basis of theoretical saturation (the point in data collection when new data no longer brings additional insights to the research questions) (Corbetta, 2003). Additional interviews were conducted with two relevant managers from the Human Resources Division.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Employee retention is a universal problem and can confront any organisation. It depends not only on the internal dynamics of the organization but also on external milieu and job market factors. It is in the best interest of government to retain its best crop and the study will therefore elucidate the rationale for employees to leave/ stay. The study will be valuable to the department to enhance performance by retaining their high performing senior personnel. The study will also serve as a useful resource for researchers and practitioners alike in the area of employee retention.

1.10 LIMITATIONS

Even though the turnover phenomenon is prevalent worldwide, the envisaged sample was not representative of a worldwide phenomenon. The latter therefore suggests that individuals selected for participation assisted the researcher to formulate, based on findings, informed impressions about relevant issues pertinent to the retention of senior managers in the social security environment within the South African context and thus generalizations would not be applicable.

The study was limited to senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security branch of the Department of Social development and did not extend to cover other branches in the department, other government departments or different sectors in society. The debate was kept as generic as possible due to the sensitivity of data to

the chosen department. Given that employee turnover is a perceptive issue, some respondents were reluctant to participate or were suspicious of the study's intentions. Some were unwilling to disclose their true opinions, fearing negative impact on their jobs or career limitations. Furthermore, some employees could have exaggerated the situation than it actually is, based on their negative experience with the organisation and some responses may have been biased

Researcher bias could not be ruled out as the researcher is employed in the same organization. To circumvent the above possibilities, assurances were given where required by way of the researcher presenting the exercise as purely academic but also allowing participants to consent voluntarily. Senior managers who were uncomfortable were allowed to withdraw without mention i.e. privacy and confidentiality was guaranteed. Ethical issues hereafter clearly outline how the research set-up was handled.

1.11 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Department of Social Development who are the bursary payers for employees attending the Wits MM P&DM programme. The research topic was approved by the Post Graduate Committee of the Wits School of Governance.

Consent

All persons who participated in this study had freely consented to participation, without being compelled or unfairly pressurized. They were well-informed of what participation entailed, and reassured that declining to participate would not affect them in anyway whatsoever. Written consent for participating was obtained from all the participants.

Confidentiality

Since there are always underlying reservations regarding participating in such studies, emanating from fear of victimisation amongst other reasons, it was not

always simple or even possible to measure the dangers of the context to a given population, let alone to individuals. It was therefore imperative to protect the identity of the person from whom information was gathered. Participants had an option not to divulge their names and after collection, the identity of the participants was protected at all times and not left lying around in notebooks or un-protected computer files.

1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The research report has five (5) chapters briefly outlined as follows:

Chapter One introduces the report and sets the tone for discussion by reflecting on contextual factors; the problem statement under investigation; the purpose statement; research questions and a brief orientation to the methodology followed

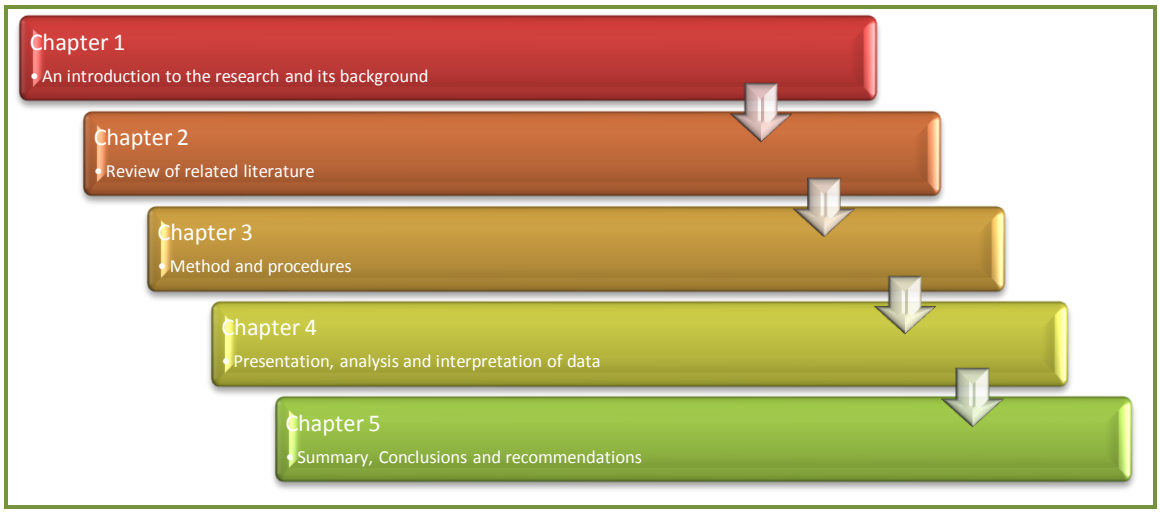
Chapter Two which entails the literature reviewed and focuses mainly on the themes identified in the literature and provides the theoretical framework for the research.

Chapter Three elucidates the research methodology applied and the motive for that particular approach

Chapter Four is the presentation of data, analysis and interpretation thereof (the findings, what it all means)

Chapter Five which is the final chapter furnishes the study's conclusion culminating in its recommendations.

Figure 2: Structure of the report



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature followed a deliberate theoretical course to strategic human capital management, career management and a comprehension of organisational dynamics with the view to isolating a potential and relevant theoretical framework that could possibly explain fundamentals around the topic. It became apparent that the fusion of strategic human resources management and career management present such a potential framework if one was to make attempts at answering primary and secondary research questions as contained in chapter one.

Several authors hold that organisations must rely on the expertise of their employees in order to compete favourably and indeed gain competitive advantage. It is therefore only logical that senior leaders, managers and HR professionals increasingly look at retention as a major organisational imperative to drive the achievement of organisational objectives.

To contextualise an understanding of employee retention, literature on career management, organisational dynamics/ behaviour, and strategic human resources management has reflected on exit interviews. The literature purports that exit interviews are generally conducted to establish why employees leave organisations (Mok & Luk, 1995).

The literature further asserts that an exit interview is a powerful tool that one can use to listen to the feedback of an employee who is terminating his or her employment with an organization. This type of interview is therefore key to organizational improvement since it tends to provide a frank feedback than one provided by current employees (Stone, 2005). The link between retention, turnover and exit interviews is therefore prevalent throughout the literature.

2.2 PURPOSE

The literature consulted, both regional and international, demonstrates how continuous research in the subject of exit interviews will assist organisations in their employee retention efforts. The purpose of this literature review is therefore to understand challenges faced by organisations in South Africa particularly, in the Public and Development sector in managing and/or improving employee retention. To achieve this purpose, baseline themes considered relevant are here-under presented.

2.3 THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM THE LITERATURE

The following highlighted themes were central to understanding what the research would be articulating. The approach adopted for this literature review entailed a deliberate and focused discussion of the literature using themes as the basis. This was informed by the researcher's need to deal with relevant material without a long winded discussion of broad human resources management and/ or human capital concepts. It is for this reason that themes were isolated from the surveyed literature and presented hereunder as the core of the literature.

2.3.1 Theme 1: Employee Retention

Employee retention refers to the length of time employees remain employed within an organization, as opposed to employee turnover, which relate to the percentage of employees who leave an organization at particular points of the employment process. Employers measure overall retention as well as departmental retention according to position or title (Bothma & Roodt, 2012).

Retention metrics developed for this purpose can therefore show the total time employees stay in their positions before leaving for other departments or organisations. Browell (2003) views the measurement of retention helpful in the creation of succession plans that take into consideration, an employee's length of time completed in each role as he/she ascends the ladder of positions within the organisation.

The literature reveals different definitions of employee retention, the type of employees to be retained, and what approach to follow when defining a retention strategy. Several authors including Bothma & Roodt (2012), Du Plooy & Roodt (2010), Greyling & Stanz (2010), Griffeth, Horn, & Gaertner (2000), Kotzé & Roodt (2005) and Mendes & Stander (2011) have written on the subject of employee retention.

Browell (2003, p.5) defines employee retention as “keeping those members of staff that one wants to keep and not losing them from the organisation for whatever reason, especially to competitors”. Similarly, Schuler & Jackson (2006, p.216), define retention as “everything an employer does to encourage qualified and productive employees to continue working for the organisation”.

In addition to Browell‘s view, McKeown (2002) asserts that retention should be aimed only at top performing employees. Consequently, McKeown (2002, p.8) defined a top performing employee as one who ‘adds value, contributes to the organisation overall and inspires others‘. McKeown however cautions that there is no precise definition of employee retention because managers’ perceptions of retention vary. McKeown (2002, p. 2) further explains that some managers view employee retention as ‘reducing the employee turnover figure to an acceptable level, whilst others think retention is about ‘compensation and benefits, moreover, some think of it as ‘a component of culture, that is, how people are treated within the organisation.

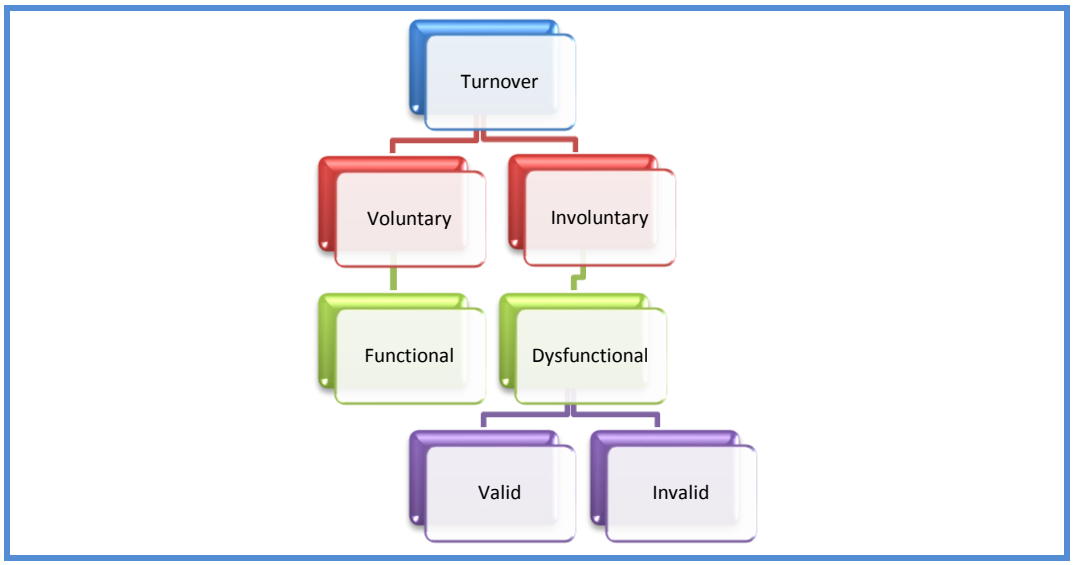
Retention is a voluntary move by an organisation to create an environment which engages employees for the long term (Chaminade, 2007). Cardy & Lengnick-Hall (2011) also advocate the view that if the best workers are not retained, an organization can be negatively affected from the operational to the strategic level. They also argue that human capital remains one of the few resources that can provide a sustainable competitive advantage thus avoiding an organization being subjected to a poor competitive advantage. To successfully manage a retention exercise, it is therefore imperative for one to first understand the reasons why employees leave and/ or choose to remain in the organisation’s employ (Taylor, 2002; Arthur, 2002; Dawson, 2004 & Steel, Griffeth, & Hom, 2002)

2.3.2 Theme 2: Employee Turnover

Functional turnover as explained by Stovel & Bontis (2002) places emphasis on the fact that bad performers tend to leave and good performers stay. The latter scenario can help reduce suboptimal organisational performance, however, high turnover levels remain detrimental to the organisation‘s productivity.

On the contrary, Abassi and Hollman (2000) argue that dysfunctional turnover (i.e. good performers leave and bad performers stay) damages the organisation through decreased innovation, delayed services, improper implementation of new programmes and degenerated productivity. In lieu of this different levels of turnover, Bliss (2007) and Sutherland (2004) are of the view that organisations lose productivity, social capital and suffer customer defection when a productive employee quits. Departing employees take away a great deal of accumulated knowledge with them (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee, 2001).

Figure 3: Turnover types



Source: Turnover classification (Griffeth & Hom, 2001, pp. 4)

Figure 3 as conceptualised in Griffeth & Hom (2001) shows that turnover can be voluntary or involuntary from an employee‘s perspective, functional or dysfunctional for an organisation‘s performance, and avoidable or unavoidable in terms of an

organisation‘s ability to influence the decision. From the organisation‘s perspective, voluntary turnover (the employee has made the decision to leave) is undesirable as it represents the employee-initiated separation (Griffeth & Hom, 2001).
By contrast, involuntary turnover (the employer has made the decision to exit the employee) represents employee exit that the organisation has initiated, usually for reasons of poor performance, business efficiency or changed labour demand (Griffeth & Hom, 2001).

Voluntary turnover is initiated by the employee, and it is the employee‘s choice to terminate employment. Examples include an employee who leaves for a new position at a different employer due to managerial issues, not fitting in with the established organizational culture and therefore finding alternative employment at an organization that seems to be a better match, or leaving the workforce altogether for other personal reasons (Abassi & Hollman, 2000; Hewitt’s & Associates, 2006; Sherman, Alper & Wolfson, 2006)

The fact that employees exit an organization voluntarily may be an indication in part that issues exist within an organisation which may be cultural, contributing in driving talented employees away. Alternatively, a separation could be an employee being asked to leave by the organization, i.e. involuntarily. Examples of involuntary turnover may include drivers like poor employee performance, layoffs/downsizing due to cost-cutting or losses in revenue, death or disability. Involuntary turnover is more often linked to organisational performance (Stovel & Bontis, 2002; Cardy & Lengnick-Hall, 2011).

Abassi & Hollman (2000) emphasised the view that functional turnover, representing voluntary separations that result in positive outcomes for organisational performance, is helpful in that it could facilitate the replacement of a poor performing employee with a more highly skilled worker. Dysfunctional turnover represents the loss of employees who are highly skilled and good performers that will be difficult to replace. Finally, dysfunctional turnover can be further divided into avoidable (turnover that the organisation can take steps to

control) and unavoidable (turn-over that is beyond the control of organisational actions) (Griffeth & Hom, 2001).

In concluding this sub-section, several authors like Abassi & Hollman (2000), Hewitt's & Associates (2006) & Sherman, *et al* (2006) highlighted additional factors for consideration when dealing with employee turnover as follows: hiring practices critical to understand; managerial styles in organisations; lack of employee recognition; lack of a competitive compensation system as well as exposing employees to toxic workplace environments. Meanwhile, other authors include amongst others, lack of interesting work, lack of job security, lack of promotion and inadequate training and development opportunities as worthy factors to be considered (Raub, & Streit, 2006).

Notwithstanding all the above factors, the problem of turnover can be proactively managed through a variety of active retention strategies: workplace policies and practices which increase employee commitment and loyalty (Lockhead & Stephens, 2004).

2.3.3 Theme 3: Exit interview

It is unrealistic to think that employees considered good in organisations can be trapped. When such people leave, organisations must know why and adjust hiring profiles, policies and practices within the organisation to address their concerns (Lefkowitz, & Katz, 1969). For this purpose, a structured exit interview program can play an integral role in employee retention. It is therefore important for organisations to learn from the information gleaned from these interviews and use such information in attempts to manage employee turnover.

Flamholtz (2003) states that the "exit interview enables not only an improved understanding of the reasons why employees leave, but provides opportunities for effective communication in several additional areas as well. Exit interviews, adequately crafted and used, are for various reasons considered powerful tools for analysing turnover" (Mok & Luk, 1995).

An exit interview is seen as a discussion that varies in structure and formality, between the departing employee and the employer representative normally holding a management role, designed to get information about the employment experience and motivations for leaving (Evans 2006; Rudman, 2002; Stone, 2005).
The interview spans wide-ranging content that includes amongst others, reasons for leaving; employee perception of management and the organisation; general satisfaction with the job, working conditions, organisational climate; work-related socialisation issues; training received and career opportunities (Evans, 2006).

Given the latter content, the principal aim of conducting exit interviews therefore becomes a platform to provide employers with information that would assist in preventing the loss of other employees over time, for example, through the identification of training and development needs (Green, 2004).
Employees who leave an organisation can provide considerable insight into the problems they faced during the tenure of their employment (Deery, 2000). On the contrary, exit interviews have been condemned as an invasion into an employee‘s right to privacy and that they are more beneficial to the organisation than to the employee.

2.3.4 Theme 4: Job satisfaction

Whilst job satisfaction has been found to be the most important tool for employee retention, dissatisfaction in a job is commonly being reported as the reason why many employees leave for other jobs. Employee satisfaction means that employees are fully engaged in their tasks and generally feel that the organisation appreciates their efforts and diligence (Mc Shane & Glinow, 2005).

It is generally assumed that many employees leave for higher paying jobs elsewhere, however, in many instances dissatisfaction has been cited as the key reason for turnover. It is thus imperative to be guided by job satisfaction as referring to how employees perceive their jobs (Mc Shane & Glinow, 2005).

The above indicates an emotional state resulting from experiences at work meaning that if employees experience high satisfaction with their jobs, a pleasurable

emotional state may result (Bartolo & Furlonger, 1999; Ivancevich, 2008) thus leading to an employee's positive reaction to organizational efforts (Feinstein, 2002; Oshagbemi, 2000).

According to Hom & Kinicki (2001), job dissatisfaction can activate turnover. They argue that dissatisfaction makes it easier for employees to leave the organization, particularly in areas where the employment rate is low. Once the employees develop thoughts about leaving an employment situation given available alternatives, terminating the employment becomes easily formalised.

Further to the above, Hom & Kinicki (2001) and Ivancevich (2008) argue that job satisfaction is inter-twined with turnover rates. The view expressed is that employees who are generally satisfied with their jobs tend to stay. Thus, job satisfaction and turnover move in opposite directions; when job satisfaction is reported to be high, turnover is often low, and vice versa. Given the above phenomenon, an employer's best interest is served when the focus is on ways to improve employee satisfaction (Ivancevich, 2008).

2.3.5 Theme 5: Staff morale

Seroka (2009) and Haddock (2010) agree that employee (staff) morale is the general level of confidence or optimism experienced by person or a group of people, especially if it relates to discipline and willingness. The issue of morale is critical to operational success and should be the cornerstone for any retention strategy in liue of the fact that disengaged workers are generally less efficient, miss more workdays and cost organizations in lost productivity ((Macintosh, 2012).

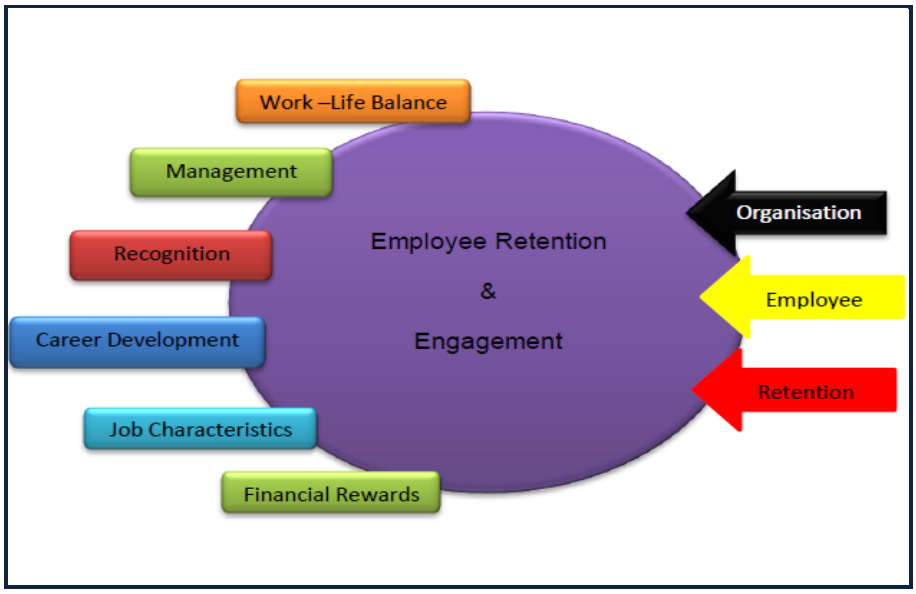
It therefore follows that keeping employee morale high is one of the critical interventions for organisations to instil loyalty and maintain a productive workplace. If individual employees or groups of employees are increasingly disengaged from their respective work stations or the organization or showing feelings of frustration, turnover will not be avoided nor be better managed. It would therefore be imperative to examine all incidences or issues that trigger unhappiness within an organisation. This objective knowledge can assist in taking proactive measures to

improve employee morale by addressing those specific concerns (Ivancevich, 2008; Feinstein, 2002).

Griffeth and Hom (2001), state that many turnover theorists view job attraction or employee's expectation of future improvements in their job or future attainment of other desirable positions inside the organization as potential deterrents to turnover. This illustrates the significance of recruiting employees who fit organizational values and are likely to stay longer in the organisation (Ivancevich, 2008). Attraction and retention of employees complement each other and if both are done well, they can produce excellent human capital.

According to Luecke (2002), when human assets are measurably superior, all other competing organizations take notice and initiate processes to lure them away with higher pay, more authority, and more appealing work situations. This, therefore, illustrates that retention is a challenge faced by many organizations in all sectors in the world. Luecke (2002), therefore argues that for retention strategies to be effective, organisations have to look after the interests of current employees as part of motivating them to higher levels of performance. Luecke (2002) concludes that when employees are happy, the chances of them leaving the organization become limited.

Figure 4: Motivational factors for employee retention and engagement



Source: Modified from the International Journal of Development Research, 2014

The above figure shows generally, that there are numerous factors that determine the ability of an organization to attract and retain employees. Muppuri, N. (2014) states that employers can increase employee retention and engagement through a number of practical people-focused strategies. He further argues that an effective retention program is one that embraces a variety of policies and practices to create a work environment where employees want to feel comfortable. He enlists the strategies as: Financial Rewards, Career Development, Job Characteristics, Recognition, Work-Life Balance and Management. The benefits of adopting these strategies are greater than having to frequently replace exceptional talent.

2.4 COMPLEXITY AND COMPETING VIEWS

Research on talent retention centres around understanding various reasons leading to employees' decisions to leave organizations, as well as processes by which people make such choices. By understanding why people leave, organizations can also gain a better idea of why people stay and can learn how to influence these decisions (Muppuri, 2014)

A great deal of turnover research focuses on people who leave organizations, on the assumption that understanding why people depart will help organizations determine how to retain them. If the latter holds, it would also be valuable to understand why employees stay. Despite the vast literature on employee turnover, which is aimed at identifying factors that cause employees to quit (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000), much less is known about the factors that compel employees to stay.

Some recent studies have examined the ways in which employees become embedded in their jobs and in their communities. As employees participate in their professional and community life, they develop a web of connections and relationships on and off the job (Hooley, Watts, Sultana, & Neary, 2012). Leaving a job would require severing or rearranging these connections. Employees who have many connections are more embedded, and thus have numerous reasons to stay. (Hooley*, et al*, 2012)

Consistent with views expressed under theme 3 i.e. exit interviews, it is evident that employees considered good in organisations have options and can leave

organisations when situations permit. It has also been established that when such people leave, organisations must know why and adjust hiring profiles, policies and practices within the organisation to address their concerns. For this purpose, a structured exit interview program is seen as pivotal in understanding their motives but also as an important practise to enhance employee retention (Flamholtz, 2003).

It is therefore important for organisations to learn from the information gleaned through these interviews and use such information in attempts to manage employee turnover. As earlier stated, Flamholtz (2003) asserts that an exit interview enables not only an improved understanding of the reasons why employees leave, but provides opportunities for effective communication in several additional areas as well; and that this view cannot be overemphasised.

When to conduct exit interviews as powerful tools for analysing turnover (Mok & Luk, 1995) remains a challenge. Some practitioners argue that the timing of exit interviews should coincide with the last day of an employee within the organisation's premises others advocating for a time earlier in the final week of employment. These conflicting positions though informed by various pros and cons, need to be explored.

2.5 ASSUMPTIONS

The general assumption is that exit interviews can act as strategic tools as they assist human resource practitioners in determining the causes of employee dissatisfaction, so that changes can be made to common human resources management practices in the process ensuring that employee turnover can be reduced (Giacalone, Knouse& Montagliani, 1997; Johns & Johnson, 2005).
In line with the above, there also is a perception or an assumption that when employees are dissatisfied, exiting the organization becomes one of the considered options. According to Nel, Gerber, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono and Werner (2001) high absenteeism and labour turnover figures might be an indication of dissatisfaction in an organization.

One of the limitations and a major problem in understanding executive retention is that many studies fail to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary turnover. In fact, most writers agree that 60-70% of executive turnover is due to normal planned

retirements, with another 10-17% maintaining that turnover is due to dismissals either for cause or due to restructuring (Comte & Mihal, 1990; DeFond & Park, 1999; Vancil, 1987).

A different assessment by Karlsson and Neilson (2009) indicate that the rate of forced departures may be as high as 35%. On the contrary, voluntary turnover has been reported to be as low as 2-4% in those studies in which the authors consciously made attempts to distinguish voluntary from involuntary turnover (Balsam et al., 2007; Dunford et al., 2008).

The traditional assumption has been that turnover is an undesirable outcome to be avoided. This view is based on the significant costs associated with an employee quitting, costs that include lost productivity on the part of the departing employee (reduced productivity while his or her attention is diverted to searching for a job, lost labour during the period between the time the individual quits and a replacement is hired, and reduced productivity of the new hire while learning the job), recruiting costs involved in finding a replacement, and likely reduced productivity of co-workers who need to fill in for the departing individual as well as time spend mentoring his or her replacement. Estimates of these direct costs range from 90% to 200% of the departing employee‘s salary (Cascio & Boudreau, 2008).

These direct costs are likely to be significantly higher for the departure of a CEO or for other members of the top management team (Bennis, *et al*, 2000; Gibelman & Gelman, 2002).

2.6 EMERGING THEORY

Empirical studies by Kinnear & Sutherland (2001) and Maertz & Griffeth (2004) have revealed that extrinsic factors such as competitive salary, good interpersonal relationships, friendly working environment and job security were cited by employees as key motivational variables that influenced their retention in organisations. Furthermore, empirical evidence strongly supports the position that intent to stay or leave is strongly and consistently related to voluntary turnover (Lambert, Hogan & Barton, 2001).

Much research on talent retention has centered on understanding the varied reasons behind employees' decisions to leave organizations, as well as the processes by which people make such choices. By understanding why people leave, organizations can also gain a better idea of why people stay and can learn how to influence these decisions. Barnard-Simon's theory of organizational equilibrium (1938) can shed valuable light on these matters.

According to this theory, an individual will stay with an organization as long as the inducements it offers such as satisfactory pay, good working conditions and developmental opportunities are equal to or greater than the contributions in time and effort required of the person by the organization. Moreover, these judgements are affected by both the individual's desire to leave the organization and the ease with which he or she could depart. This theory, albeit old, contributed to the researcher's understanding of the subject at hand and allowed for an informed analysis of data later in the report

2.7 CONCLUSION

The surveyed literature shed light on key issues pertinent to employee retention; it assisted in setting the broad context of the study. It was evident that turnover is cause for concern in every organisation. Overall, at least five themes emerged from the literature reviewed viz. employee retention; employee turnover; exit interview; job satisfaction and employee morale. These themes coupled to the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data collected presented interesting integration.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Poisat (2006) research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. This is discerned by data collection and sampling approaches that provide the distinguishing character of a research project. Methodology in research entails the research process, tools and procedures that researchers identify and use in the collecting, organizing and examining of data. It provides readers of the research report with information that demonstrates how the inquiry was carried out and what the researcher established as a potential solution to the identified problem.

Neuman (2006) purports that methodology provides an understanding of a social organisational context associated philosophical assumptions to such a context, ethical principles and appropriate project activities. The latter is consistent with the assertion by Brink (1996) that methodological research improves the reliability and validity of data collection tools.

The methodology used for the research aimed at answering the following questions:

What are the challenges faced by the Department of Social Development in retaining senior managers?

What motivates senior managers' intentions to leave the department?

To what extent are senior managers managed to avert turnover intention?

What strategies should the Department consider and/or implement in order to retain senior managers?

The chapter discusses how the research was conducted. A structured approach was followed which entailed, inter alia, a discussion of the philosophical paradigm

underpinning the research, the research strategy which mapped how data was collected, how the sample was selected, key ethical issues considered, culminating in reflections around the study's significance.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Collis and Hussey (2009) define Research Design as the science (art) of planning procedures for conducting studies so as to get the most valid findings. The design is a logical model that operates as a lucid plan outlining the study, the researcher‘s methods of collation, significance of the study, ethical considerations, aspects of how the study will reach its conclusion, and limitations of the study.

3.2.1 Research philosophy/ paradigm

The researcher applied a naturalistic philosophy as it focused more on understanding what was happening in a particular instance rather than on attempting to predict what would happen in the future. This paradigm, with its recognition of various perspectives of truth and continually changing reality, accentuated the significance of context, of intricacy, and of examining conditions in which the factors interrelated (Creswell, 2007)

The epistemology of the study followed **interpretive constructionism** which argues that the premise of understanding is discovering what people perceive of the world around them, how they interpret what they come across, and how they ascribe meanings and values to occasions. It can also be referred to as the **Social Constructionism** in the field of management research to emphasize its reliance on contingent features of social beings (Easterby-Smith et al. 2006).

According to this philosophical approach researchers give importance to their beliefs and value to give adequate justification to a research problem (Easterby-Smith et al. 2006). Primarily, the philosophy requires researchers to focus on highlighting real facts and figures according to the research problem. The approach requires smaller samples for an in-depth understanding of views held by many in the same population (Kasi, 2009). The next section gives an orientation to the research strategy and/ or approach followed.

3.2.2 Research strategy/ approach

The study applied a **basic interpretive qualitative research** strategy as it was mainly dealing with information that could not be quantifiable. According to Creswell (2007), interpretive qualitative research is used to study problems that seek to understand the meanings of individuals or groups as they identify with a social or human problem. This approach emerged from Interpretive Social Science where meaningful social interaction is accentuated. Interpretative social science relates to a theory of meaning which is premised on an in-depth inquiry into text which could refer to a conversation, written words or pictures, and relating its parts to the whole can reveal deeper meaning (Neuman, 2006)

The approach further argues that reality is constructed by people as they interact in their environment and therefore the interest of researchers should be about how people make sense of their interactions with the environment (Neuman, 2006).
The approach was thus adopted to understand the meaning of how people make sense of their experience, in this instance, the challenges that the Department of Social Development (DSD) experiences in the retention of its senior managers. The choice of a qualitative approach is further informed by the fact that qualitative research has been widely used in the study of organisations (Welman, *et al*, 2005).

The adopted approach was also **inductive** in the sense that the researcher built a concept by first collecting data and then developed a conclusion by looking for a pattern of meaning on the basis of the data collected. The research was conducted to afford a better comprehension of the given context involving only a relatively small group of people, who are not randomly selected to participate because the research focused on a small sample.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher acted as a primary instrument for data collection. The following tools were used to collect data:

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews (also called focused interviews)

An interview is a “managed verbal exchange of information which effectively depends on the communication skills of the interviewer” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Whereas, Corbetta (2003) defines a semi structured interview as the order in which the various topics are dealt with and the wording of the questions are left to the interviewer’s discretion. Within each topic, the interviewer is free to conduct the conversation as he thinks fit, to ask the questions he deems appropriate in the words he considers best, to give explanation and ask for clarification if the answer is not clear, to prompt the respondent to elucidate further if necessary, and to establish his own style of conversation.

The above method relies on the inter-personal skills of the interviewer, the ability to establish relationship and rapport. These qualities are valuable but ethically very sensitive (Newton, 2010).

Prior to the interviews, the researcher prepared an interview guide. McNamara (2009) suggests the importance of the preparation stage in order to maintain an unambiguous focus as to how the interviews will be instituted in order to provide maximum benefit to the proposed research study.

The interviewees were identified and contacted by email to request their participation in the research. After they had acceded to participate, interview times were arranged. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face for senior managers who are still in the department or through VOIP (Skype) for the ones that have since left the department.

A reliable SONY IC digital recorder was used for recording interview data because it has the obvious advantage of preserving the entire verbal part of the interview for later analysis. The researcher was aware that the only drawback with recording could be the batteries dying before the end and always had extra batteries to circumvent any contingencies. As a backup, the interviewer had a Samsung Note 4 which would be used in the event the recorder malfunctioned.

Occasionally, additional notes to the recording were taken particularly when the interviewer wanted to note points of emphasis or highlight aspects of the conversation that required further probing. Taking notes made the production of the final notes and the evaluation thereof quicker.

The semi-structured interview questions were designed to gather the participant's feelings, beliefs and perceptions around the topic of retention. Open-ended questions were used as this allowed the respondents to use their own words to answer thus providing information that more restrictive questions could eliminate (Patton, 2002). Probing questions were utilised to expound meaning and seek elaboration. At the end of the interview, participants were requested to add anything they thought could be important or what they thought would enhance the meaning of earlier responses. The interviewer then summarised key points that the respondent had made, to provide the respondent with a final chance to expand or clarify any points. The interviews lasted between 1- 1½ hours.

3.3.2 Content Analysis

Organisations develop a plethora of reports that are readily available on their websites. In fact, the question often becomes not how to get one's hands on relevant documents, but rather how many documents are too many (Love, 2003).
Bryman defines content analysis as "An approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts. There is an emphasis on allowing categories to emerge out of data and on recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analysed (and the categories derived from it) appeared" (2004, p.542).

For secondary data, documents such as DSD annual reports and reports on key exit interview experiences were sourced. These were analysed to ascertain the extent of turnover within the CSS branch and the cited reasons thereof. Statistical data such as data on the senior management turnover for the last 24 months (i.e. 2012/13-2013/14) and descriptive data from the exit interviews for the same period were scrutinised.

3.4 SAMPLING

All senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security were potential candidates for the interview, including those that have since left the department. Therefore the sample in this qualitative research was purposive which means that participants were selected because they were likely to generate useful data for the research.
Purposive sampling (also known as judgemental sampling) is non-random sample in which the researcher uses a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of a highly specific and difficult-to reach population (Neuman: 2011).

The purposive sample size was determined on the basis of theoretical saturation (the point in data collection when new data no longer bring additional insights to the research questions). Purposive sampling is done according to criteria relevant to a particular research question. It uses people who can help find answers to the research questions posed (Henning, *et al*., 2004).

The research participants were senior managers and professional employees from the National Department of Social Development. The study focused on senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security branch who have been in the department for at least two years. The reason for this criterion was to ensure that they served long enough in the organisation to have observed and formed perceptions around the issues at hand.

The participants spanned Directors, Chief Directors and Deputy Director- Generals. These are managers who operate at strategic level and are conversant with the mandate and objectives of the department. The department can therefore not afford to lose managers from these levels because of their vast experience and added competences through the years.

For the purpose of this study, six current senior managers, two departed senior managers and two human resource managers (one from the recruitment and placement function and the other from human resources development) were interviewed.

3.5 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY, ETHICS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Validity and reliability are intrinsically interrelated issues of methodology which are generally challenged by positivist research paradigms when applied to qualitative studies. The typical questions asked to discount the two when used in qualitative research according to Bryman (2012), include amongst others: how can one generalise from a small sample?; would two people doing the same study get the same results?; does the researcher get these results because he or she is biased?

It is evident that these questions challenge the notion of qualitative research as being sufficiently rigorous. Validity primarily refers to whether one observes or identifies what one states (Kirk & Miller, 1986). On the contrary, reliability measures the degree to which the study can be replicated (Bryman, 2012). In lieu of the latter challenge, some authors refer to trustworthiness and authenticity as better alternatives.

The principle of authenticity requires the research strategy and data sources used to allow for data validation using:-

> Triangulation where interview responses are confirmed by reflecting on other sources like documents in the process developing confidence in the data (Merriam, 1995). Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The result will be presented in narratives with careful triangulation between the interview recordings, interview transcripts and field notes.
>
> Other strategies for data validation include member checks, peer examinations and submersion in the research situation but Merriam (1995) argues that these approaches are time consuming. Where possible, member checking would be done i.e. participant's transcription will be returned to them via e-mail for them to verify the accuracy of the data collected.

In an attempt to achieve reliability and to essentially indicate the consistency of the approach, the researcher applied the following approach: document the procedures of the research; double check the transcripts for mistakes; and check the persistence

of the meaning of the developed codes. Albeit interpretive bias remains a challenge, the researcher was conscious and cautious in observations and interpretation of all data collected and therefore, sufficient validity and reliability was realized.

With respect to meeting ethical requirements, the research proposal was first defended before a panel for interrogation and scrutiny. Following the successful defence of the proposal, it was then submitted to relevant committees of the university for Appropriate Levels of ethical clearance before being confirmed as meeting all requirements by the Post Graduate Committee (PGC) of the Wits School of Governance

The researcher then sought permission from the Head of the National Department of Social Development which is the population of choice and bursary payers to officials who attend Wits MM P&DM programme. The final accepted research proposal and a copy of the provisional interview guide accompanied the request for permission.

Prior to starting with the research study, a consent form was given to potential participants to read. Again the researcher read the consent form to the participants prior to their signing in order to answer any questions that would impact their participation. The consent was considered as an “ongoing process” whereby participants would be allowed to withdraw at any stage without explanation. The background and purpose of the research was disclosed to avoid any possible exploitation of the participants. Participants were given full information to enable them to make decisions on whether to participate in the study or not. Participants were reassured that their identity would remain anonymous and that all the discussions would be held confidential and this was done by using pseudonyms or codes instead of real names of respondents.

Even though the turnover phenomenon is prevalent worldwide, the envisaged sample was not representative of a worldwide phenomenon. The latter therefore suggests that individuals selected for participation assisted the researcher to formulate, based on findings, informed impressions about relevant issues pertinent to the social security environment within the South African context and thus generalizations would not be applicable.

The study was limited to senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security branch of the Department of Social development and did not extend to cover other branches in the department, other government departments or different sectors in society. Furthermore, due to hectic schedules of the managers, accessing them was difficult. Given that employee turnover is a perceptive issue, some respondents were reluctant to participate in the survey or suspicious of the study intentions. Some were unwilling to disclose their true opinions, fearing negative impact on their jobs or career limitations. Furthermore, some employees could have exaggerated the situation than it actually is, based on their negative experience with the organisation and some responses may have been biased

3.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Employee retention is a universal problem and can confront any organisation. It depends not only on the internal dynamics of the organization but also on external milieu and job market factors. It is in the best interest of government to retain its best crop and the study aimed at elucidating the rationale for employees to leave/ stay.

It is envisaged that the study will be valuable to the department as another measure of enhancing performance by retaining high performing senior personnel. In addition to the latter benefit, the study would likely also serve as a useful resource for human resources practitioners and/ or researchers in the area of employee retention.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the research methodology applied and the motive for that particular approach. The chapter focused on the research design, research methods, data collection techniques and the administration thereof. It also examined how the sample selection was conducted. Issues of validity, reliability, ethics and limitations of the study form the integral part of this study and were adequately discussed. Sufficient ground was covered to lay a foundation for the following chapter, which will be the integration of findings, analysis and the interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The data collected in line with the methodology presented in the previous chapter, through semi structured interviews, is analysed and interpreted. The process of analysing the data entailed transcribing, coding, categorising and making sense of the essential meanings.

According to Patton (2002), “qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes, but no recipe. Direction can and will be offered, but the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when and if arrived at” (p. 432).The chapter presents data as obtained from participants as well as an analysis of such data. The data used was acquired from primary and secondary sources.

The analysis and data interpretation is informed by the researcher’s need to answer the following questions:

What are the challenges faced by the Department of Social Development in retaining senior managers?

What motivates senior managers’ intentions to leave the department?

To what extent are senior managers managed to avert turnover intention?

What strategies should the Department consider and/or implement in order to retain senior managers?

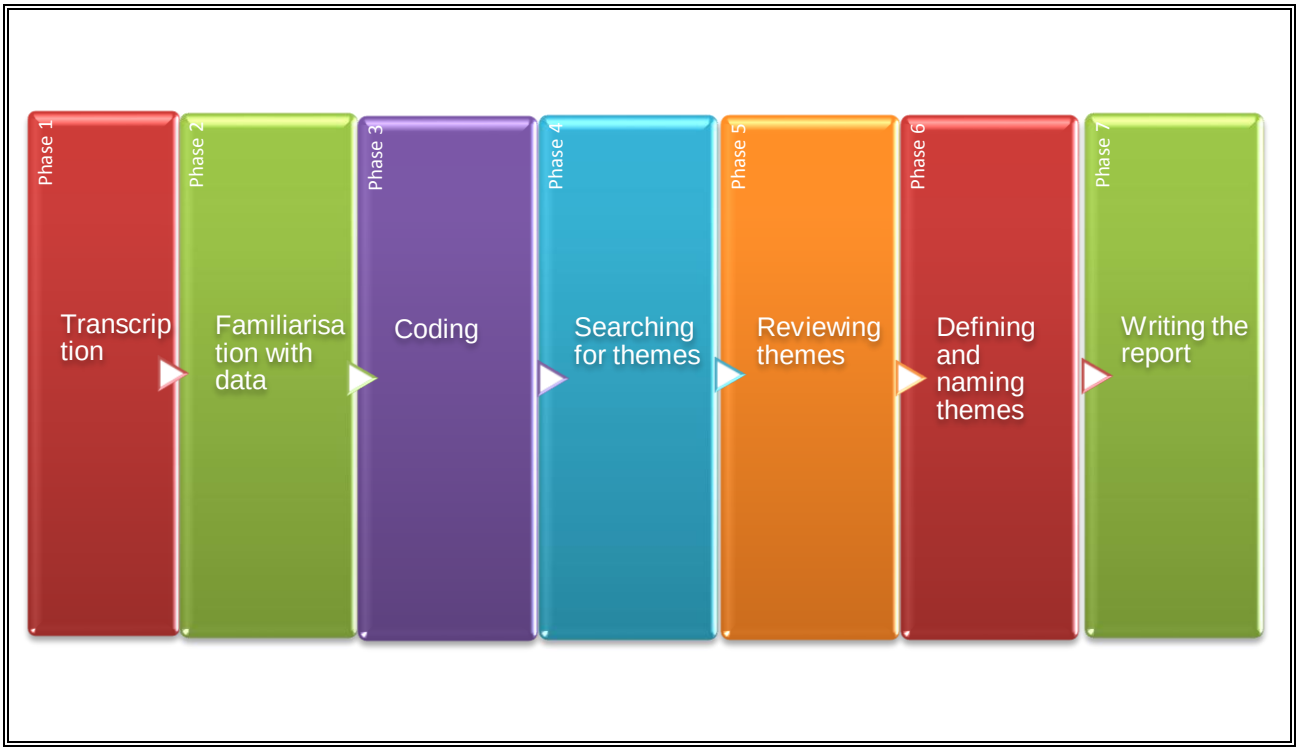
The study adopted a Thematic Analysis (TA) approach. Braun and Clarke (2013) define thematic analysis as a method for identifying themes (or patterns of meaning) across a dataset in relation to a research question, describing it as “relatively unique among qualitative analytic methods in that it only provides a method for data analysis; it does not prescribe methods of data collection, theoretical positions, epistemological or ontological frameworks. It really is just a method” (p. 178).

4.2 THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS APPROACH

The purpose of TA was to identify patterns of meaning across the dataset in an attempt to answer the research questions contained in Chapter One and reiterated in the above introduction. The patterns were identified by way of a stringent process. In essence, the researcher initially examined and read the data numerous times, while inceptive ideas or impressions were registered. Then, portions of interesting or insightful data were assigned an initial set of codes. Subsequently, to discover themes, relationships or similarities between the codes were identified. Furthermore, to ascertain that the themes were inclusive and depicting the data, the data was reviewed, as the themes were altered and defined. Eventually, the themes were compiled into a meaningful and unified narrative.

Braun and Clarke (2013), pp. 202–203, provide a 'guide' to the 7 phases of conducting thematic. Although these phases were consecutive, and each built on the preceding one, analysis was typically a recursive process, with movement back and forth between different phases.

Figure 5: Braun and Clarke's seven phases of Thematic Analysis



Source: Modified from the Qualitative Report 2014 Volume 19, Review 16, 1-4

4.2.1 Phase 1: Transcription

Gibbs (2007: 11) argued that there were reasons for transcribing information and suggested that for conversation analysis a detailed transcript was necessary.



Eleven 5.0.12 was used for transcribing the primary data collected from the interviews. This is a downloadable convenient and innate piece of software developed to provide the ability to capture audio calls made on Skype, save them to a personal computer whilst transcribing the messages to editable text.
Eleven also transcribes existing records. The audio files from the face-to-face interview recordings were converted to MP3, loaded onto the programme and transcribed to text which was then copied onto a Word document for analysis.

For the skype interviews, it operates in the background. In the course of calling, you select one of 40 languages of the conversation (which was English in the case of interviews for this study). Upon maiden use, the researcher had to authorize it in the Skype window, for it to capture the audio stream. Thereafter, the access confirmation was no longer necessary. The programme does not launch automatically, therefore, for every call, it had to be run from its shortcut or file.
Eleven allowed the researcher to obtain a transcription for each one of the interview conversations with minimal effort involved.

4.2.2 Phase 2: Familiarisation with the data

This process began during the interviews where the researcher noted points of emphasis or highlighted aspects of the conversation to probe further. The researcher then got immersed in the raw data by listening to all the audio recordings with comprehension. The notes were also scrutinised in order to list key ideas and recurrent themes. When all the data had been fully transcribed, the researcher read and re-read the transcripts to become engaged and closely familiar with its content. The intensive process also entailed calling some of the interviewees to seek clarity on equivocal issues.

4.2.3 Phase 3: Coding

Taylor and Gibbs (2010) define coding as the process of examining the data for themes, ideas and categories and then marking similar passages of text with a code label so that they can easily be retrieved at a later stage for further comparison and analysis. Whereas, Neuman (20011) says that data coding in qualitative research means that the researcher organizes raw data into conceptual categories and creates themes or concepts. Gibbs (2007: 38) referred to coding as the indexing or categorizing of text such that a framework of thematic ideas was established.

The phase involved generating succinct labels (codes) that identified important peculiarities of the data that might be relevant to answering the research questions. Unique identifiers for the respondents and their transcripts were allocated into a spreadsheet. The researcher used numbers to identify interviewees as part of ensuring anonymity as promised e.g. 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 010 were used to represent the participants' names.

Coding the data made it simpler to explore the data, to make collations and to determine any patterns. The codes were based on common phrases found in the data. The codes were then given meaningful names to give an indication of the idea or concept that underpins the phrase. All parts of the data that related to a code topic were coded with the appropriate label. As the researcher went through the data sets, the number of codes evolved and grew as more topics became apparent. The list of codes thus helped to identify the issues contained in the data set.

The researcher gained access to numerous relevant departmental documents that would add impetus to the study. The documents were: the DSD annual reports; the CSS Staff profile; Personal Development Plans (PDP) and 2013-2014 senior management turnover rates. Secondary data collected from these official documents was also analysed in line with the key themes to ascertain the extent of turnover within the department and the cited reasons thereof. Phase 4.2.4 overleaf outlines the process followed in searching the data for themes.

4.2.4 Phase 4: Searching for themes

The researcher began with perusing the codes and collated data to determine significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes) that accurately depicted the data. In accordance with Braun and Clarke (2006, p.82) ‘A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set’.

In the study, a myriad of repetitive patterns of evidence emerged naturally from the interviews as would be reflected by the findings. These patterns advanced the development of themes and thematic codes, which allowed the researcher to continue with thematic analysis**.**

A theme was created when the same issues and ideas expressed by the interviewees within the data were assembled into one category or cluster. The themes were branded by a word or expression excerpted from the data or generated by the researcher for it seemed to best embody the essential characteristics of what is being said.

4.2.5 Phase 5: Reviewing themes

This phase involved checking if the candidate themes made sense and account for all the extracts against the dataset, to determine that they tell a convincing story of the data and one that answers the research questions. The themes were distinctively refined, which at times involved them being split, combined, or discarded.

4.2.6 Phase 6: Defining and naming themes

In this phase, clear definitions and informative names for each theme were generated which involved developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme, determining the ‘story’ of each. A thorough description of what aspects of data were being captured in each theme, and what was interesting about the themes was detailed.

4.2.7 Phase 7: Writing the report

The final phase entailed putting together the analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualising the analysis in relation to existing literature. The findings were reported as the researcher's objective interpretation.

4.3 DATA PRESENTATION

This is comprehensive analysis of the identified themes and what they contribute to understanding the data. This section reports the findings of the study based on the problem statement and research questions constructed for the study. To reiterate, Social Security is a relatively new academic field and therefore, not many people are qualified in this field. Senior managers in the department have undergone skills development programmes within and outside the country to be equipped with the requisite skills. The skills acquired are extensive, sought after and obviously poached by many institutions similar or different in focus.

The purpose of the study was therefore, to explore the challenges of retaining senior managers at the National Department of Social Development (CSS branch); and the objectives were: to discern the antecedents of senior management retention; to establish the level of turnover and identify the recent trends in turnover levels; to explore the intentions for people to leave/ stay in the department; and to identify strategies of retaining senior managers.

Following in-depth interviews, data gathered was categorised primarily into five themes which according to those interviewed were considered critical factors. The themes were purely drawn from the in-depth interview processes and reflected the following:

4.3.1 THEME 1 FROM INTERVIEWS: Organisational Red tape

The major role of the Comprehensive Social Security (CSS) branch is to provide for social security policy development, administrative justice, the administration of social grants and the reduction of incorrect payments. Even though respondents to the study are all within the senior management level of the Department, organisational

red tape came out as a major challenge faced. Bozeman (2000) succinctly defines organisational red tape as “burdensome administrative rules and procedures that have negative effects on the organization’s performance.”
In lieu of what was established in chapter two, red tape impacts job satisfaction, the most important tool for employee retention. It is evident that where employees are as a result of red tape not appropriately engaged in the approval of their tasks once concluded, they are likely to feel that the organisation does not appreciate their efforts and diligence (Mc Shane & Glinow, 2005).

Given the general assumption that many employees leave for higher paying jobs because of many instances of dissatisfaction, it is imperative that red tape be managed differently to allow for employees to experience job satisfaction (Mc Shane & Glinow, 2005).

The senior management level also has lines of reporting with directors reporting to chief directors, chief directors reporting to deputy director generals, deputy director generals reporting to the director general and the director general reporting to the Minister who is a political head of the Department. Among the interviewed, every level was raising a concern about the level ahead. As one respondent retorted:

“ For a simple decision to be taken, even if it’s not a procurement decision, one needs to generate a memo for approval and the red tape for approval may take up to six weeks “

Most of the participants found this frustrating and felt that organisational red tape impedes on the ability to perform their duties. The delayed approval may mean that a project is halted and the time lags are crucial to service delivery.

“… there are too many gatekeepers, seeking approval and waiting a long time for a response kills momentum”

The above statement clearly demonstrates the dejection felt by the respondent towards the delay and how it impacts on progress. The despondency towards the red tape emerged as a common theme amongst the respondents and provokes the

frustration that leads to some senior managers contemplating to leave the department.

"…an organisation which recognises my level of operation and allows me take decisions will be more conducive"

While the study can neither confirm nor deny the above assertion, it is essential to note at this point that the intent to leave is imminent. The sentiments were shared by the departed senior managers who also cited the 'bureaucracy' amongst others, as the rationale for their departure. This is illustrated by the following response.

"Maybe if I was given the space to take decisions without being obstructed by insistence on unnecessary hierarchical procedures…"

It can therefore be concluded from the responses that organisational red tape does pose a challenge to retention of the senior managers in the department.

4.3.2 THEME 2 FROM INTERVIEWS: Performance Appraisal

All the respondents expressed concerning views on performance appraisal. Most of them were disgruntled with the performance appraisal system of the department, with some saying that their performance had never been reviewed, some saying theirs have been reviewed all the years they've been with the department but never got feedback, some saying that they only got rewarded three years after the year of a positive review and the others saying all they get every year is just pay progression despite having motivated sufficiently to be rewarded.

Performance appraisal may be defined as the process by which superiors evaluate the performance of subordinates, typically on an annual or semi-annual basis for the purpose of determining raises, promotions, or training needs (Grote, 2011).

"I've been with this department for four years but I'm still earning at the entry level of my rank, new employees in this rank get the same salary as mine"

"My former boss has left the department and therefore nobody is willing to support my motivation"

"The rating scale that me and my supervisor agreed on was 137% which meant that my performance was significantly above expectations and therefore would qualify for a Package Progression and 8% Cash bonus but I never got anything"

These are some of the responses from the interviews which all indicate the dissatisfaction with the way the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) is run in the department. The emphasis of performance management systems is on continuously improving organizational performance, and this is achieved through improved individual employee performance (Macky & Johnson, 2000).

Performance appraisals are mainly conducted on an annual basis and can be regarded as a larger process of linking individual performance management to organisational performance. A performance assessment tool is used which clearly links to the Key Performance Areas and indicators as set out in performance agreements and work plans. Midterm reviews are conducted, and performance moderation committees convene annually to moderate the performance of all qualifying officials and make recommendations for performance incentives (DSD Annual Report, 2014)

"The performance moderation is conducted more like a 'witch hunt' to find reasons not to incentivise employees'

When the respondent uttered this statement, the dismay was written all over his face. The members of the moderating committee are also SMS members and it is appalling that they trigger such reactions from other colleagues.

Performance appraisals of all senior managers go through the moderation committee for scrutiny. The executive managers have to convincingly present their subordinates' cases and justify why the employee deserves to be rewarded. This tedious process drags on for months due to the unavailability of executive managers. Ultimately the performance appraisal files are then taken to the Minister for approval.

However, due to the minister's hectic schedule, the process takes very long. Over and above that, the Minister has the prerogative to increase or decrease the scores.

In the DSD Annual Report 2014, this is justified by saying: "… there is still room for improvement especially with regard to adherence to due dates in specific areas such as submission of performance agreements and work plans as per the PMDS policy". This argument does not hold, because late submission by an employee disqualifies the report from consideration.

In some instances, the respondents were using the terms recognition and reward interchangeably. However, employee recognition refers to nonmonetary incentives, while employee rewards are often in the form of cash incentives, bonuses or spot awards (Grote, 2011)

Table 1: Performance rewards awarded (DSD Annual Report, 2014)

Critical Occupation	Beneficiary Profile			Cost	
	Number of beneficiaries	Number of employees	% of total within occupation	Total Cost(R'000)	Average cost per employee
Senior Managers, permanent	13	100	13.0	396	30 443
Senior managers, contract	0	7	0	0	0
TOTAL	**13**	**107**	**13.0**	**396**	**30 443**

The above table means that of the total 107 senior managers in the department, only 13 were rewarded, implying that the others did not perform well.

Recognition is a low-cost solution to showing appreciation for the work employees do and their commitment to the organisation. Using recognition as a retention tool can positively impact turnover (Teke, M. 2002).

The respondents cited three forms of recognition which were verbal praise from supervisor and other leaders, salary increases, and awards. The salary increases indicated that the member has achieved outstanding results against all of the performance criteria, and or went an extra mile by taking on additional responsibilities. The respondents indicated that the PMDS has a part where both the senior manager and the supervisor agree on the development, training, coaching, guidance and exposure needed by the SMS member.

"Since I never get any recognition for my performance, I assume I'm not performing well and therefore expect to be trained in order to improve"

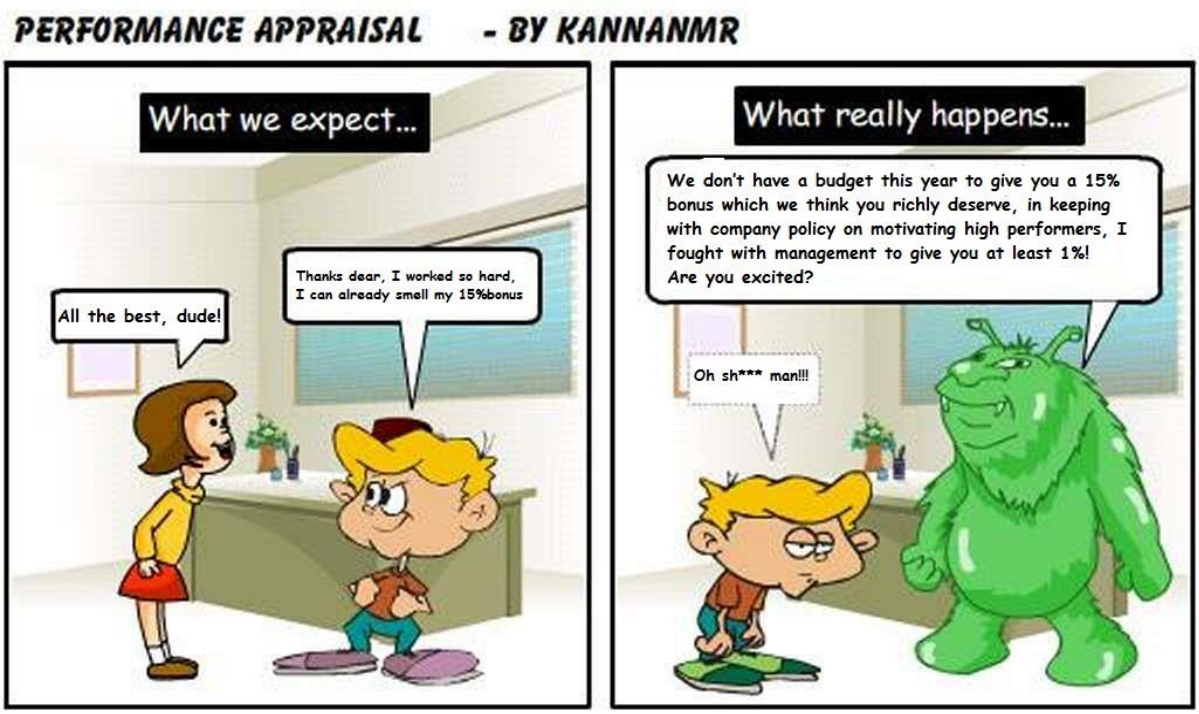
The above generated significant but different views as some respondents indicated that irrespective of the outcome of the performance appraisal, departmental officials are offered numerous training opportunities with others claiming that they were not exposed to such an arrangement. Teke, (2002) argues that training activities should ideally be based on performance gaps that are identified during the performance review phase.

The respondents acknowledged the scarce skills possessed by the senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security branch ranging from economists, statisticians, actuarial scientists, lawyers and policy experts.

"The department paid for my training abroad because the qualification was not offered in the local universities"

These skills are touted and poached by the private sector with a promise of better benefits. Having these kinds of skills, coupled with the disgruntlement of not being recognised results in an efflux of much needed talent, an unfortunate loss to the department. The cartoon depicts sentiments expressed by some interviewees.

Figure 6- Performance Appraisal by Kannanmr



This figure portrays the situation that has been identified from the responses of the interviews as follows: The employee is looking forward to a hard earned bonus, most probably having budget plans for it only to be disappointed by the employer. The respondents thought that it is only fair for employees to be recognised for performing functions beyond the call of duty.

4.3.3 THEME 3 FROM INTERVIEWS: Better opportunities

Every employee aspires to earn more, have a better life and/ or even live large. It is only human nature to identify oneself with the job and a career. People's self-esteem is based upon what they do i.e. their job title. The universe constantly reinforces this with accentuation on ego, rank, and the possession of personal net worth.

This concept of better opportunities emerged out of a number of interviewees with some terming it 'greener pastures', which is an idiomatic expression for a better or more exciting job; and some referring to it as 'jumping the ship' which is another idiomatic expression of quitting something. When employees feel that they have reached a cul-de-sac in their organisation, they may move on to greener pastures. Advancement opportunities are important to keep employees. As alluded to before,

the skills possessed by the senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security branch are touted and poached by the private sector with a promise of better benefits. It is therefore incumbent on the employer to ensure that employees have career paths they can work towards.

"The private sector pays better than the public sector"

Concerning the statement above, the respondent will most certainly leave the department if offered an opportunity by a private sector company. This sentiment is shared by other interviewees. In order to support Browell's (2003) statement of "keeping those members of staff that one wants to keep and not losing them from the organisation for whatever reason, especially to competitors", the department needs to put systems in place that will curb this 'greener pastures' scourge. It is detrimental to the institutional memory and impedes on continuity.

"I have been in this department, at this same level for eight years and my salary is not commensurate to the skills and experience I have"

Public service salary scales are determined by the Department of Public Service and administration. Progression of an employee from one rank to the next requires a process of application and going through interviews which does not necessarily guarantee that one will be promoted. Often, the position will get filled by an external candidate leaving the other one distraught.

"…having 'acted' in this position so many times that if I was in Hollywood, I would be a movie star"

It is surprising that the Department has enough confidence in the respondent to let them act in the position but not confident enough to appoint them permanently.

The department is ignorant of the fact that the acting role beefs up the curriculum vitae of the employee and deems the employee eligible for other positions

elsewhere. This leads to eroding loyalty of the employee towards the department and subsequent intentions to leave.

> *"Sometimes one has a garden of flowers but will not notice this beautiful rose in the garden until somebody else picks it"*

This metaphor was used by one of the respondents to illustrate that the Department does not appreciate their senior managers until they are appointed by other organisations. Once appointed elsewhere, senior managers leave voids in their positions that normally take long to fill. When an employee leaves the department for a direct competitor that provides similar services, chances are that they will export essential business strategies and secrets to be applied by the competition much to the department's dismay at times even in the presence of a signed restraint of trade.

As Mitchell, et al (2001) has indicated that departing employees take away a great deal of accumulated knowledge with them. The era of loyal employees spending years with the same employer until they reach retirement seem to be fading.

4.3.4 THEME 4 FROM INTERVIEWS: Organisational climate

Organisational climate is said to be a mixture of norms, values, expectations, policies and procedures that exist in an organisation which influence the work motivation, commitment, performance and ultimately individual satisfaction in the work or about the whole organisation itself. It deals with the employees perceptions of the working environment. Depending on these perceptions, a positive climate will encourage employees, whereas a negative climate will constrain arbitrary exertion. Organisational climate is defined as the set of characteristics that describe an organization and that distinguish the organization from other organizations and influence the behaviour of people in the organization (Farooqui, 2012: 296). It is inclusive of leadership styles, and participation in decision making.

The study respondents have linked retention to organisational climate. The responses reflected one common issue of pockets of decision making where other senior managers are excluded from the process.

"All senior managers were recently instructed to add a new Key Performance Area in their Annual Performance Plans which is to 'Participate in the Ministerial Social Development Services Monitoring Project' called Mikondzo."

The statements above and below are intended to illustrate the haphazard way in which things were done. Even though the intention of the KPA was good, being introduced in the middle of the year when senior managers have already finalised their plans threw the entire Department into complete disarray. Senior Managers had to put their line function projects on hold and focus on Mikondzo.

"It turns out that the Mikondzo project was not sufficiently budgeted for and the funds ran out before the project could be completed"

Such decisions are taken without participation of other managers and lead to lack of ownership of the project, poor participation and general dissatisfaction with the leadership.

"Despite directors being part of the senior management system, they are excluded from MANCO (Management Committee) which is a forum for managers where decisions are taken"

When individuals feel that they are respected and valued within the department, they will contribute positively towards the attainment of its goals. Employees in the department have particular expectations and desires. The realisation of these expectations and desires rely upon their perceptions on how the organizational climate addresses them.

"A climate survey was conducted in the department but no one has been privy to the outcomes of the survey"

The survey that the respondent is referring to is mentioned in the DSD Annual Adjusted HR Plan 2014/2015. The survey was conducted in 2009. Unfortunately, true to what the respondent said, the researcher could not get a copy of the full

report of the survey but outcomes pertaining to Work environment are listed in the DSD Annual Adjusted HR Plan 2014/2015 as follows:

Table 2: Climate survey excerpt

Working Environment

1. Analysis

The previous climate survey conducted by the Department identified the following five negative dimensions:

- Employee management relations
- Retention of staff
- Workplace transformation and change management
- Respect
- Planning and Control

2. Implications and Challenges

The climate survey also identified the following 5 most positive dimensions

- Role clarity
- Employment equity
- Workforce diversity and inclusion
- Teamwork/support
- Organisational structure

Offices environment such as infrastructure, parking, office space, computers and printers remain factors that lead to dissatisfaction amongst employees. These include areas of communication and working relation.

3. Recommendations

In order to improve the work environment, the department still need to:

- Ensure excellent frontline reception service and customer care
- Improve relationships for improved working environment
- Strengthen internal communication
- Increased morale, improved productivity and staff satisfaction
- Enhance teamwork and active participation by employees in organisational activities
- Strengthen DSD culture and ensure collective ownership of departmental values (e.g. by creating a tapestry, where employees will take part
- Empower staff, instilling responsibility and accountability and ownership of unity objectives

Source: DSD Annual Adjusted HR Plan 2014/2015

The document referred to above does not indicate the extent to which the recommendations have been implemented.

Accordingly, organizational climate affords a type of work setting in which employees feel satisfied or dissatisfied. The efficiency of an individual is determined by his level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction thus one can conclude that organizational climate has direct relation to his performance in the organization. Good organisational climate attracts worthy and efficient personnel to the organization who ultimately enhance the general performance of the organization.

4.3.5 THEME 5 FROM INTERVIEWS: Employee Morale

The interview participants confirmed the contention of Seroka (2009) and Haddock (2010) that employee morale is the general level of confidence or optimism experienced by a person or a group of people, especially if it relates to discipline and willingness. When morale is high, it can improve performance and sustain a fully committed workforce. On the contrary, low employee morale alienates the workforce, rendering it tough for supervisors to do their jobs.
Employee morale is not easy to measure, but it's effortlessly recognizable in whichever trajectory it takes, be it low or high. The conclusion drawn from the above is one suggesting that employee morale is critical to operational success and should be the cornerstone for any retention strategy (Seroka, 2009 & Haddock, 2010).

In the instance of this study, the impact of employee morale is quite significant since the respondents are all senior managers. Their morale automatically influences the morale of the subordinates, systematically cascading down through each level.

Notably, the attitude and perception towards the job, work environment, and the organisation is different in each unit. Perhaps this is influenced by the attitude of each unit's head

Management styles can substantially have an effect on workplace morale, thus, poor management skills can cause bad attitudes and behaviour at work

Morale as a state of mind that affects feelings and emotions can be considered an elusive quality. Positive employee morale is distinguishable by confidence, discipline and willingness to perform while low or negative employee morale can include job security issues, ambiguous business conditions, restricted upward movement, and inadequate compensation. These may lead to absenteeism, illness and subsequent depression (Oshagbemi, 2000).

> *"Even a slight headache makes me think of not coming to work. Conferences and seminars are more appealing to me because they take me out of the office"*

For the researcher, the above statement also shed light on why it was so difficult to locate the senior managers for the interviews. A present and healthy workforce accomplishes more. Sick days cost the department money and increased health and insurance costs.

Table 3: Sick leave by salary band

Salary band	Total days	% days of medical certificate	Number of employees using sick leave	% of total employees using sick leave	Average days per employee	Estimated cost (R'000)
Senior management (levels 13-16)	417	83.7	60	10.2	7	840
Contract (levels 13-16)	4	0	1	0.2	4	8
TOTAL	**421**	**83.7**	**61**	**10.4**	**11**	**848**

Table 2 as sourced from the DSD Annual report, 2014 depicts the sick leave for SMS of the whole department and not for the Comprehensive Social Security branch only. The digits reflected in figure 7 are a cause for concern considering what it costs to the department. It is also worth noting that these are only for the days where a leave form was actually submitted, some days are unaccounted for.

When an employee is absent for one day, a medical certificate is not required, therefore employees will have random one day leaves scattered over a month.

Given that employee morale is critical to operational success and should be the cornerstone for any retention strategy, the picture above may be an indication of disengaged workers who would largely or over time be less efficient, be prone to missing more workdays and in the process of being absent costing the department in lost productivity. The latter orientation is adequately expressed by Macintosh (2012).who concludes that in such situations, high turnover is a possibility.

It is incumbent upon the executives to discern the issues that ignite melancholy within the department in order to deal with them accordingly. Failing which, employees are bound to seek employment elsewhere.

Melancholy is an emotional state resulting from experiences at work or elsewhere and for employees experiencing high levels of dissatisfaction with their jobs, a sombre emotional state may result leading to the ultimate being turnover.

The latter interpretation is consistent with views expressed by Bartolo & Furlonger (1999) and Ivancevich (2008). In line with the above, coupled to the perception or an assumption that when employees are dissatisfied, exiting the organization becomes one of the considered options, high absenteeism and turnover may follow (Nel, Gerber, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono & Werner, 2001)

Table 4: Annual Turnover rates by salary band

Salary Band	Number of employees as at 1 April 2013	Appointments and transfers into the Department	Terminations and transfers out of the Department	Turnover Rate
SMS Band A, Permanent	69	08	07	10.1
SMS Band B, Permanent	17	01	04	23.5
SMS Band C, Permanent	02	02	0	0
SMS Band D, Permanent	03	0	0	0
Contract Band A, permanent	05	02	02	40
Contract Band B, permanent	01	0	01	100
Contract Band C, permanent	0	0	0	0
Contract Band D, permanent	01	0	0	0
TOTAL	**98**	**13**	**14**	**173.6**

A sumptuous indicator of low morale is high turnover i.e. when employees exit because they are unhappy with their jobs. High turnover also imply considerable recruitment and replacement costs will be incurred (Cascio & Boudreau, 2008)

Figure 7: DSD Annual Adjusted HR Plan 2014/2015 – Employee Turnover



The employment rate increased by 3% due to the expansion of the structure, and by a further 9.5% due to staff exits (183 appointments and 138 terminations). The department lost a number of officials due to resignations during the reporting period. It is also worth noting that the most changes were experienced at SMS level where there were a large number of service terminations which increased by 27% (DSD Annual Adjusted HR Plan 2014/2015). With high levels of depressed employee morale, it is evident that turnover becomes a reasonable consequence and in line with Cascio & Boudreau (2008) it follows that the employment rate increase will attract associated costs.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter concentrated on five themes that were identified during interviews with the ten participants and afforded a cohesive analysis using literature that could be sourced. In conclusion, the chapter noted five main themes as agreed to by the study participants namely, organisational red tape, performance appraisal, better opportunities, organisational climate as well as employee morale.

The participants highlighted underlying factors that contributed to the inefficient and ineffective management of retention processes i.e. challenges the DSD faces in

relation to senior management retention. The responses of the study participants showed that there were gaps to be addressed in managing the retention of senior managers within the DSD. The researcher formulated findings from the meanings that were drawn from the querying of thematically coded data. In presenting the data, the researcher brought to life new and detailed understanding about the setting.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the final chapter which furnishes the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study. The chapter will culminate in a list of recommendations which will be valuable to the department to enhance performance by retaining their high performing senior managers. The study provides the department with the necessary recommendations to get employees to stay in the organizations.

As outlined throughout the report, the analysis and data interpretation was informed by the researcher's need to answer the following questions, with the view to crafting relevant and practical recommendations that if adequately attended to could improve the retention of senior managers at the DSD. The questions referred to above are:

What are the challenges faced by the Department of Social Development in retaining senior managers?

What motivates senior managers' intentions to leave the department?

To what extent are senior managers managed to avert turnover intention?

What strategies should the Department consider and/or implement in order to retain senior managers?

As outlined in this report, several matters remain at stake when retention is not given the necessary prioritisation. The following inferences were derived from the underlying factors that led to the challenges of senior management retention. Increasing retention requires careful planning and implementation.

It is vital for the department to realise that keeping their turnover levels low will result in ultimate fulfilment of the prescribed mandate, which is to provide the right of access to appropriate social assistance to those unable to support themselves and their dependants.

Retaining talented workers in the social security sector is therefore essential as it can enable participating organizations to deliver astounding service to beneficiaries. The study is auspicious for government to have a steady workforce. Recognizing the rationale and motivating influences that contribute to employee retention is imperative for managers. All the above with an emphasis on employee retention would contribute to economic stability in different ways i.e. enhancing job security, increasing personal income and expanding expenditure on goods and services.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are outlined in line with the identified themes.

5.2.1 Organisational red tape

There is general dejection and despondency towards the process of getting approvals which is tedious and long. The respondents are at a senior level of the department but feel that they are not accorded space to take decisions pertaining to their line function. They need the decision-making authority they require to do their work as this impedes on the effective attainment of their key performance indicators. Employees feel that it is cumbersome to get things done in the department.
There are too many hurdles to contend with in garnering approvals with the eventual result being annoyance, frustration, and paralysis. The department gets bogged down in its own internal procedures rather than focusing on its mandate. More often than not, it also leads to under-expenditure and under performance for which the manager has to account.

Due to the hierarchical and top-down characteristics of bureaucracies, operations are seen to be confusing to employees. Senior managers' commitment is the vital determinant of success. Once the commitment is lost, the likelihood is that people will opt out. The fact that the senior managers are subjected to a myriad of rules and regulations that tie their hands in different ways is motivation enough to quit. This conclusion is significant when one considers remuneration levels of senior managers against the value they should contribute to total efficiencies of the department.

5.2.2 Performance appraisal

The study deduces a common dissatisfaction with the Performance appraisal of senior managers in the department. The Performance Management and Development System (PMDS), which is used as the only tool to determine recognition and reward runs the risk of eroding employee motivation to perform and ends up having a contradictory effect of demotivating instead.
The system shows lack of alignment due to a number of organisational processes being developed in silos, with strategy, budget and operational planning being developed by diverse people with different frameworks applied. The system also lacks congruence with respect to individual performance, the performance of the department and service delivery imperatives. The latter leads to the management of performance being delayed thus culminating in the effort simply being reduced to an irrelevant discussion.

The department's poorly designed and implemented performance management system causes enormous frustration and cynicism leading to disastrous consequences. It is critical that executive management have confidence in the importance of appraisal and express evident commitment to it.

The closer the system can be to ideal characteristics, the greater the return it will yield for both for employees and employer. At the slightest hint that an employee's performance is not being acknowledged and recognised, the possibility of being allured elsewhere is considerable.

5.2.3 Better opportunities

The exceptional skills possessed by senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security branch are lured and poached by external organisations. The study shows that intention to leave and actual turnover are often highly interrelated. The study therefore concludes that when opportunities are availed, the impetus lie on the employees' personal circumstances triggering a desire to "jump ship".

Employees do not necessarily jump ship for greener pastures because they are pulled away by wonderful offers. Instead, they are forced out by a prevalence of

negative factors including amongst others, the lack of trust in executive management and the dominant organisational culture they are exposed to. It is therefore clear that if the department did more to demonstrate the extent to which they value their employees, they would retain them happily.

In line with the above, senior managers tend to grow impatient with their current roles and ultimately start thinking that the only resolve is to move elsewhere. Disengagement begins when these employees start seeking greener pastures which might have serious ramifications for the Department.

5.2.4 Organisational climate

The efficacy of retention in the Department lies primarily in the organisational climate and perceptions employees hold about such a climate. The study established a close link between organisational climate and retention. The study started by revealing the perceptions employees hold regarding the organisational climate and further established that organisational climate strongly influences an employee's decision or intention to quit. What seems to matter most to employees is whether they are happy with what goes on in the department or not; and in this case, they are not. Therefore, the organizational climate components have strong effects on the propensity to leave,

Based on the above argument, it is rational to assume that the organizational climate in the department influences senior managers' future turnover. This is consistent with the notion that the work environment plays a critical role in influencing individual behaviour. The department will find it difficult to retain unhappy employees who perceive the work environment as impervious. It is therefore imperative that the work environment be constructed in different ways aimed at being loaded with incentives of different forms so as to be conducive to those eager to trade their knowledge and skills.

5.2.5 Employee morale

The study describes an evident declining morale amongst the employees, which affects how motivated they are to work for the department and influences how long

they will stay in the department. It clearly elucidates the attitudes and sentiments of senior managers towards the department. The debilitating mood of employees is spread through all levels of senior management and detrimental to the turnover rate of the department.

Based on the findings of the study, it can generally be concluded that the employee retention strategy was a major factor that greatly contributed to the department's major challenges. The study also found that one of the critical parameters from exiting employees was that exit interviews were not regularly conducted whenever employees left. This inconsistent use of exit interviews hampered the organisation's ability to identify core reasons that influenced employees to leave the organisation.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Themes enlisted above are predictors of an intention to leave. They depict the challenges of retaining senior managers at the Department of Social Development. It is evident that the retention of employees should not be left to be handled by human resource departments alone; rather it should be looked at as part of the overall organisational strategy since senior managers play a major role in service delivery. If handled as suggested, causative factors to turnover will be managed at top management level and action will be taken to minimise employee turnover.

The conclusions as drawn in the previous section led to the development of recommendations that will in most probability assist the Department of Social Development in its endeavours to retain senior managers. All the sources consulted indicated important features that the DSD should focus on in order to reduce employee turnover. Cognizant of the reviewed literature, the subsequent research conducted and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are found to be appropriate and relevant to the environment of the DSD:

5.3.1 Cut the red tape

'Cutting the red tape' refers to a conscious decision to reduce bureaucratic obstacles to action. The aim of reducing red tape is not to remove all the policies, management and administrative processes. It is rather, to focus rules, regulations, procedures and systems on accomplishing their objectives in an efficient and effective way. Wherever this is not possible, it necessitates making sure that employees can relate with the policies and procedures in a more proficient and transparent manner by:

- Ensuring that the Department regulates only when necessary
- Keeping adverse impacts to a minimum
- Increasing transparency and accountability by clearly stating reasons for and implications of delayed decision making
- Increasing participation through constant engagement and consultation with all senior managers mindful of all associated constraints to effective engagement

5.3.2 Appraise efficiently

Longnecker and Nykodym (1996) provide comprehensive recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of performance appraisals which the department can adopt in order to curb the efflux of senior managers. These recommendations include:

- Making sure managers and subordinates understand the appraisal system: The goal should be that everyone knows why appraisals are conducted.

- Assess the effectiveness of the current system: Identifying intended functions of the current system and what it was set up to accomplish. Also assess the degree to which employees perceive the appraisal process to be effective.

- Conducting appraisal skills training for managers: It can reasonably be concluded that the ability of the supervisor to skilfully appraise subordinates is

critical to an effective appraisal. Training must focus on helping managers develop specific appraisal skills and confidence in their ability to effectively evaluate others.

- Starting with effective performance planning: Planning is required to set the stage for effective appraisals. Therefore a large part of the process should be devoted to determining what actions need to be taken in the future.

- Making informal appraisals an ongoing activity: Annual appraisals are only as effective as what happens during the rest of the work year. Managers can increase their effectiveness by scheduling periodic, informal appraisals with subordinates on a regular basis.

- Providing resources necessary to link remuneration to performance: Define performance and contribution and reward them

- Using Anniversary dates to stagger appraisals: To provide managers time to conduct more effective appraisals, encourage the staggering of appraisals throughout the year. This reduces the difficulty of managers having to conduct numerous appraisals in condensed periods.

Finally, the negative effects of cognitive biases can be minimised by involving senior managers in designing the performance management system.

5.3.3 Be the best opportunity

The study recommends that the DSD makes a concerted effort to acquiring information when employees leave the department by conducting well recorded exit interviews. Even though it is a fact that employees who are exiting do not have incentives to give the employer in-depth information on the rationale for their departure, conducting exit interviews can still be beneficial. They can reveal unknown problems and trends.

Using exit interviews in an effective way requires analysing data captured in search of trends. Singularly, reviewing each exit interview may improve small-scale problems. But, analysing trends in exit interviews assesses the organization as a whole. This will assist the department in knowing the real reasons why people leave, be in the best position to establish problematic units and finally will also help in developing an appropriate retention strategy. Once the turnover trend is accurately identified, the department can begin to address the larger issue with a good chance of improving retention.

When a valued employee leaves, the department can use the information gathered in an exit-interview to find out the reasons for the employee's decision and the changes that can be made within the department in an effort to keep others from departing. This data can be gathered into a formal report and distributed to management, members of the human resources management team, and other pertinent employees to be used for purposes of curbing the turnover.

5.3.4 Survey the climate

From the information sourced as contained in different documents of the department, it is evident that a climate study was at some point in the recent past conducted but was not followed through. Since then, the issues might have changed and new perceptions around different variables formed. The study therefore recommends that a new climate survey be conducted. Conducting the employee climate survey will enable the department to operate more efficiently through the use of worker input and satisfaction ratings.

The proposed survey can be utilised to solicit employee opinions on a range of issues such as the department's success in communicating its mission to employees or internal matters such as quality of the working environment.

The outcome of this process will provide an understanding on how the employees perceive the department along the identified dimensions.

Feedback results and the departments' strategy in dealing with the prevalent issues should be communicated to the employees.

5.3.5 Boost employee morale

Employees get disheartened by systems and processes that do not consider their wellbeing. It is therefore imperative that the implementation of the following model be considered as the researcher believes it will sufficiently address the issues.
The purpose of the model is to encourage the retention of senior managers in the Comprehensive Social Security branch of the Department of Social Development. The processes set out below must all be interlinked in order to retain talented skills.

Figure 8: Proposed Model to boost morale



Source: Segal/Sibson's Rewards of Work (ROW) model, 2006

The Rewards of Work Model was developed by Sibson and Segal to help employers understand what their employees value and how to best motivate and retain their talent. The model consists of five rewards categories, encompassing both financial and non-financial components. The ROW model provides a comprehensive and reliable framework to understand the relationship between employee attitudes and perceptions and their relationship to organisational effectiveness such as

performance and turnover. While each category is intended to be independent of the others, some overlap among the categories is unavoidable. (Segal & Sibson, 2006).

Albeit elements of the model are known to the department, what appears lacking is how best to integrate these factors in practice. Policies and procedures can be tailored to fully integrate each category and managers can subsequently be trained to manage within this integrated paradigm. If adequately done, the researcher holds that the department will realise the return on its human capital investments.

5.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

The loss of senior managers will continue to expose the DSD to different forms of pressures and government needs to conscientiously advance strategies that will curb this phenomenon and adequately manage it. A qualitative study of this size is not sufficient and calls for commissioning of a similar study on a much bigger scale. Qualitative studies that utilise purposive sampling methods do not necessarily lead to generalizations of conclusions drawn.

Alternatively, a quantitative research should be conducted to address the same research questions in order to strengthen possibilities of generalizing research results and conclusions.

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